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2002

03 A Tribute to Jack Harvey (1919-2002)

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Recommended Citation

Jones, J. (2002). 03 A Tribute to Jack Harvey (1919-2002). Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.wcupa.edu/hist_wchest/16

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A Tribute to Jack Harvey (1919-2002)

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Jack Harvey was born on June 8, 1919 and grew up in his grandfather's house at 539 S. Franklin Street. Later on, he moved around the corner, so Jack spent more than 80 years--all but the years he served in the military--living in Riggstown. It was no wonder that he became known as the "Mayor of Riggstown."

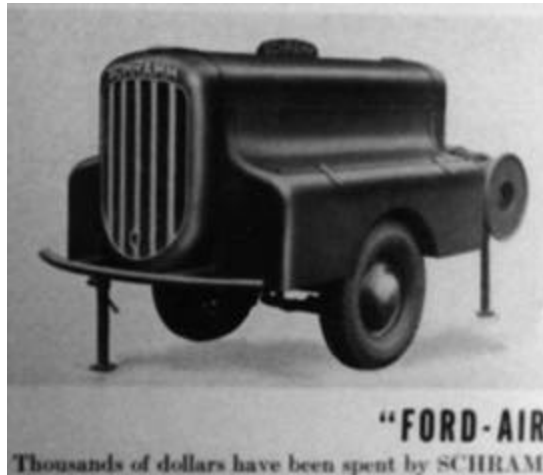
In his youth, he loved hunting, trapping and playing baseball with the other kids of Riggstown. His grandfather, Alonzo Harvey, was the last active harnessmaker in West Chester, so Jack became familiar with horses and tools at an early age. As an adult, Jack worked at the Esco Cabinet Company, Lasko Metal Products, a Delaware mushroom house, Westtown Orchards, and finally at Schramm's Air Compressors, where he retired in 1984 after 34 years.

In 1942, he married Charlotte Baum (better known as "Blondie") and they moved into a house around the corner on E. Nields Street right after World War II. They raised two sons in the neighborhood, and stayed on in Riggstown after most of their contemporaries moved out to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s.



Jack and Blondie Harvey in their kitchen

Among his many activities, Jack remained an avid hunter and trapper all of his life, and served as a Pennsylvania State Animal Control Officer, helping people to remove raccoons and other wild animals that got into their houses. That kept him busy after his retirement, as did lawn-mowing, which he did for a number of his neighbors. He and his wife were also active members of Civic Action Southeast, the local community group, and they served on a number of borough committees.



"Ford Air" compressor manufactured by Schramm



Jack (center) at the 1997 Riggtown reunion

In the mid-1990s, local history professor Jim Jones interviewed Jack and Blondie about life in Riggtown. In the words of Dr. Jones, "Jack was what you might call "feisty," but he had a good heart and was a great friend and neighbor. He would talk to anyone, didn't hesitate to say what he thought, and when there was work to be done, he'd be the first to volunteer. Any time I needed advice on how to do something around the house, I'd head over to Jack's house first. He was proud of Riggtown and he worked hard to make it a great place to live."